

Minute of Meeting Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 16 August 2022	10:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Alec Lishman, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson

Chair

Councillor J Cameron, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

L McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning and A Armstrong Walter, Strategic Partnership and Inequalities Manager (both Chief Executive's); and D Low, Democratic Services Manager, C MacDonald, Senior Committee Services Officer and D Cunningham, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Apology

Councillor Hannigan.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 **Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-committee - Meeting Arrangements**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the remit, membership and governance arrangements for the Sub-committee.

The report intimated that at its meeting held on 19 May 2022 Council agreed to establish a Sub-committee of the Leadership Board which would consider matters including social renewal, tackling poverty and the cost of living crisis. The initial remit for the Sub-committee was subsequently agreed by Council at its meeting held on 30 June 2022.

The report set out the Sub-committee's membership, agreed schedule of meetings and current meeting arrangements. The report requested that consideration be given to the appointment of a Vice-convener and also to the potential to webcast meetings of the Sub-committee.

Councillor Nicolson, seconded by Councillor McGurk, moved that Councillor Clark be appointed as Vice-convener of the Sub-committee. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the remit of the Sub-committee as agreed by Council on 30 June 2022 be noted;
- (b) That Councillor Clark be appointed as Vice-convener for the Sub-committee; and
- (c) That it be recommended that future meetings of the Sub-committee be webcast.

2 **Income, Poverty and Financial Insecurity: Overview of Current Position**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to an overview of key context and evidence around current pressures on household finances, both in terms of household income and expenditure.

The report provided an overview of key drivers of household incomes, including employment trends and recent changes relating to social security benefits. It detailed a number of key messages including: the positive recovery of employment rates in Renfrewshire following the Covid-19 pandemic, with the unemployment rate at an all-time low; recognition that many households in work had low or unpredictable incomes due to insecure employment or faced income pressures due to major life events such as having children, separation or ill-health; incomes were not able to keep pace with rising inflationary pressures meaning that household budgets were squeezed in real terms as the amount people could buy with the money they earned and/or received through social security was limited; and there had been a number of changes to social security benefits at a UK, Scottish and local level.

The report outlined recent evidence around the rising cost of living, and the significant pressure this extra expenditure puts on household finances including current estimates around the rising cost of domestic energy which would mean managing

household finances would become increasingly challenging, within the context of a wide range of inflationary pressure on essentials; the impacts of inflation were felt disproportionately in low income households, who spent a higher proportion of their income on essentials such as groceries and fuel; and where people did not have a financial 'buffer' such as savings, people needed to consider if and how they might be able to increase their income, reduce spending, or seek other means of financial support.

The report provided the latest update on child poverty figures for Renfrewshire, indicating that child poverty rates had fallen to 19.5% in 20/21 from 23.1% in 19/20. An analysis of these statics was included in the report.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 **Overview of Food and Fuel Insecurity - Presentation**

The Strategic Partnership & Inequalities Manager gave a presentation on food and fuel insecurity, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.